



SCHOOL ATTENDANCE MATTERS
A Parent's Guide



☺ WHY ATTENDANCE AT SCHOOL IS SO IMPORTANT—

If a child of compulsory school age is registered at a school it is essential that they attend their school regularly and maintain a pattern of good attendance throughout their school career.

Excellent attendance at school is important to allow a child or young person to fulfil their potential.

Below are just some of the key reasons why it is so important children attend school:

- ☑ To learn.
- ☑ To have fun.
- ☑ To make new friends.
- ☑ To experience new things in life.
- ☑ To develop awareness of other cultures, religion, ethnicity and gender differences.
- ☑ To achieve.
- ☑ To develop new skills.
- ☑ To build confidence and self-esteem.
- ☑ To have the best possible start in life.



Young people who regularly miss school without good reason are **more likely to become isolated from their friends, to underachieve in examinations and/or become involved in anti-social behaviour.**



😊 WHAT WILTSHIRE COUNCIL SAYS—

Why is attendance at school important?

- School attendance has a direct effect on a child's educational outcomes and is important for your child's future
- School attendance enables children to access all available opportunities and reach their full potential
- Children with poor attendance tend to achieve less

What could I do to help minimise my child's time off school?

- One of the best ways to help your child is to make all doctors', dentists', opticians' and other appointments for after school hours
- Make sure your child is never late for school
- If this is difficult, you should contact your child's school to discuss this matter. Speak to the class teacher, School Attendance Officer or Headteacher

How do schools work out my child's attendance?

- By Law, all children between the age of 5 and 16 must be in suitable full time education
- Schools count each day as two sessions - morning and afternoon. Your child has to attend 10 full sessions (five days morning and afternoon) each week to achieve 100 per cent attendance for that week
- Schools then calculate your child's average percentage attendance over the whole term.

You do not have a legal right to take your children out of school.

It is always the Headteacher's decision whether or not to allow you to take your child out of school during term time. If you do not ask their permission in advance, or they do not give it and you take your child out of school anyway, this will be recorded as an unauthorised absence.

Headteacher's may authorise an absence from school during term time if there are exceptional circumstances. Exceptional circumstances may include:

- the death or terminal illness of a person in the immediate family
- service personnel and other employees who cannot take leave outside term time at any point in the academic year.

Family holidays are not generally considered to be an exceptional circumstance. You must make any requests for leave of absence in advance and you must be the parent that the child normally lives with. It is important to give the Headteacher as much information as possible when applying for a leave of absence.



Education is not an option – it's compulsory.



☺ WHAT THE SCHOOL NURSES SAY—

Should my child go to school today?

Every day counts!

Headache, earache and stomach ache

- Children with headache, earache or stomach ache can go to school -
- Just let the staff know that they have felt unwell.
- Give paracetamol and plenty of fluids to drink.
- If headache, earache or stomach ache persists seek medical advice.

High temperature

- Give paracetamol and plenty to drink.
- If your child feels better bring them to school.
- If the child's high temperature continues for 3 days or more, seek medical advice.

Coughs and colds

- Children should be given paracetamol and plenty of fluids to drink.
- And can be sent to school.
- If your child is asthmatic, remember they may need their blue inhaler more often.

- Children should go back to school when recovered—this is usually about 5 days.

Sore throat, tonsillitis and glandular fever

- Children should be given paracetamol, plenty of fluids to drink and can be sent to school.

Diarrhoea and vomiting

- Children can return to school 48 hours after the last episode of diarrhoea or vomiting.

Measles

- Children should return to school 4 days after the rash has STARTED.
- Chicken pox—children should return to school 5 days after the rash has STARTED
- German measles—children should return to school 6 days after the rash has STARTED.
(Please let the school know as there may be pregnant staff members)



Children don't always need to be kept at home; check the advice before making the decision to stay off school.

☺ HOW PARENTS CAN HELP—

- ☑ Establish a good routine in the mornings and evenings so your child is prepared for the school day ahead.
- ☑ Make sure your child goes to school regularly and follows the school rules.
- ☑ Ensure your child arrives at school on time – not late!
- ☑ Arrange dental and medical appointments outside school hours when possible.
- ☑ Always inform the school if your child is absent due to illness.
- ☑ Take family holidays outside term time.
- ☑ Talk to your child about school and take an interest in their school work (including homework and reading).
- ☑ Attend parent evenings and school events.
- ☑ Praise and reward your child's achievements at school.
- ☑ Always support school staff in their efforts to control difficult or challenging behaviour.
- ☑ Discuss any problems or difficulties with the school – staff are there to help and will be supportive.



Do not be afraid to ask for help if a problem arises.



FAMILY HOLIDAYS—

You can demonstrate your commitment to your child's education by not taking holidays during term time. Any child or young person who is absent from school due to a holiday will miss out on important learning and will fall behind with their school work.

In each Academic Year there are only a maximum of 190 statutory school days – this allows plenty of time for holidays to be arranged outside term time.

Holidays taken during term time will be categorised as an unauthorised Absence and as such are subject to a Penalty Notice. Leave of absence will only be authorised in exceptional circumstances. Exceptional circumstances may include:

- The death or terminal illness of a person in the immediate family
- Service personnel and other employees who cannot take leave outside term time at any point in the academic year (a supporting letter from your employer would be required along with your application for a leave of absence).

Where a pupil's unauthorised absence amounts to 10 sessions or more with a 6 month period the Education Welfare Service will be notified and the Local Authority may issue a Penalty Notice **to each parent for each child**.

The Penalty Notice is in the sum of £120 if paid within 28 days, reduced to £60 if paid within 21 days. If the penalty is not paid in full within 28 days the Local Authority is required to commence proceedings in the Magistrates' Court for the offence of unauthorised absence.



Avoid taking family holidays during the school term





EVERY SCHOOL DAY COUNTS—

Every single day a child is absent from school equates to a day of lost learning.

Attendance percentages can be misleading.

If your child is at school for 190 days out of 190, that is 100% attendance and your child is able to benefit from all school has to offer and has a good chance of making excellent progress in their education and life chances.	
If your child is at school for 180 days out of 190 that is 95% and means that your child has missed 10 days of learning and is able to catch up with missed lessons. This is the percentage that the UK Government expects all children to be able to achieve.	95%
If your child is at school for 170 days out of 190 that is 89% and means that your child has missed 20 days (4 weeks) of learning which is hard to catch up with.	89%
If your child is at school for 160 days out of 190 that is 85% and means that your child has missed 30 days (6 weeks) of learning this will impact their progress at school.	85%
If your child is at school for 150 days out of 190 that is 79% and means that your child has missed 40 days (8 weeks) of learning this will seriously impact the progress your child is making and may hinder their future life chances.	79%
If your child is at school for 140 days out of 190 that is 74% and means that your child has missed 50 days (10 weeks) of learning. Your child is being denied a considerable amount of their educational entitlement and the consequences on their life chances may be far reaching and irreparable.	74%

For some parents, 90% may seem like an acceptable level of attendance, but the reality is that 90% attendance means that your child will miss half a school day each week. If your child has 90% attendance over 5 school years they will have missed half a year of school.



Give your child the best start in life—every school day counts!



**Thank you for your continued support towards improving
school attendance**